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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 003658

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SUBJECT: KUWAITI FM TELLS A/S BLOOMFIELD FUEL ISSUE
RESOLVED; FOCUSES ON IRAQ'S FUTURE

REF: KUWAIT 03592

1. (C) SUMMARY: On October 20, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Shaykh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah told PM A/S Lincoln Bloomfield Jr., PDASD Peter Flory, and the Ambassador that a fuel contract for OIF support was required by the GOK's constitutional framework and that Parliament would hold the Minister of Energy responsible for any outlay of fuel not formalized in writing. A/S Bloomfield outlined efforts to set the stage for January elections in Iraq and reassured the FM that the U.S. would remain in Iraq until the mission is completed. The FM raised the regional conference on Iraq in Sharm El Sheikh and GOK's opposition to France's proposal for a concurrent meeting of Iraqi opposition figures. END SUMMARY

OIF Fuel Contract

2. (C) In an October 20 meeting, Kuwaiti FM Shaykh Dr. Mohammed told PM A/S Bloomfield, PDASD Flory, and the Ambassador that the issue of fuel for OIF operations would be resolved once a contract was signed. He confirmed GOK support for U.S. activities in Iraq and the continued supply of fuel, but explained that a contract was needed due to GOK constitutional framework, and the duration negotiated by the Minister of Energy. For the sake of transparency and to protect the Minister of Energy from parliamentary inquiries, there had to be a contract with the details clearly defined.

Need for Security and Credible Elections

3. (C) At the Minister's request, Bloomfield reviewed Iraqi Prime Minister Allawi's plan to quell the violence and efforts to provide security for the UN role in Iraq. He also addressed the need to confirm Sunni support for the new Iraq in order to isolate and defeat extremists in their midst. The ability of Iraq to control its future was based on a few key factors: the political process, building up the security sector, and persuading all Iraqis to turn against violent actors. The first, the political process, encompasses the electoral process and the ability of Iraqi and Coalition forces to overcome insurgent efforts to disrupt January's election. Comparing Iraq to Afghanistan, Bloomfield noted the strategic success of an election was the ability to hold a credible election, adding that the goal in Iraq was always 100 percent participation. He noted that in recent days the IIG has issued guidelines for the conduct of the election.

Iraq's Need For International Assistance

4. (C) Bloomfield expressed hope that in the upcoming Sharm El Sheikh conference Iraqis would be able to stand in front of their neighbors and the international community and focus their attention on Iraq's need for support at an historic juncture. Kuwait said the FM, supports the conference and is doing what it can, from giving 65 million dollars in aid to sending retired General Ali Al-Mumin to oversee the aid distribution in Najaf. The GOK is building hospitals and schools all over Iraq, the FM shared, and the GOK will continue to help not only in the South where it has the strongest interests. The Ambassador noted that there appeared to be no support for French ideas to invite opposition figures to Sharm El Sheikh. The FM stated that he hoped the French idea could be stopped, adding that he had already shared this sentiment with the Egyptians and they concurred.

Sunni Perception of Their Place

5. (C) Bloomfield explained the need to change any negative perception that Iraqi Sunnis have about their place in the new Iraq. He emphasized that the Sunni population had to be brought into the fold and counseled that their future was with democracy and not with the insurgents, foreign or otherwise. Bloomfield explained that the Sunni had to distance themselves from the insurgents and to understand that a democracy does not mean that Iraq will become a Shi'a version of Saddam's dictatorship. He noted that the insurgents had nothing to offer but bloodshed and murder.

Timetable for Scaling Back Troop Numbers

16. (C) The FM then asked about a timetable for U.S. withdrawal. Bloomfield assured him that U.S. forces would not leave Iraq until the mission is finished. If the insurgents lose their footing then the timetable will change for the better. PDASD Flory added that the strategic dynamic in this regard is Iraqis taking control of their future; Afghanistan is an example for the Iraqi people.

Syria and Iran

17. (C) The FM asked pointed questions about a recent U.S. engagement with Syria to control the border. Explaining that Syria must take control of its own border, Bloomfield remarked that it is in Syrian interest to stop insurgents from crossing into Iraq. The FM expressed concern about the Ba'ath party reconstituting itself in Iraq but Bloomfield stressed that a true democracy allows for all types of parties and that he doubted Ba'athism would hold any appeal for free Iraqi citizens after the history of abuses Iraq had suffered under that party. PDASD Flory added that there is more to the equation than just border control; Syria must make a strategic decision not to oppose Coalition efforts in Iraq.

18. (C) As for Iran, Bloomfield made clear that Iran needed to keep out of Iraq's affairs, particularly as the Iraqi election process unfolds. He added that Iran needed to resolve international concerns about its nuclear intentions and should cooperate fully with the IAEA. Concluding, Bloomfield told the FM that he does not see the Shi'a in the south turning towards Iran as Muqtadr Al Sadr was very unpopular while Ayatollah Al Sistani's embrace of democracy was more representative of Shi'a sentiment.

19. (C) Article 98 ratification discussion sent reftel.

110. (U) This cable was cleared by A/S Bloomfield and PDASD Flory.

111. (U) Baghdad: Minimize considered.
LeBaron